



Measuring National Well-being in the UK: Insights across Society, the Economy and the Environment

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There is widespread agreement that measures such as GDP are increasingly considered as providing an incomplete picture of the state of the nation and that other economic, environmental and social measures are needed alongside GDP to provide a complete picture of 'how society is doing'. In November 2010, supported by UK Prime Minister David Cameron, the Office for National Statistics launched the 'Measuring National Well-being Programme' with the aim of establishing "an accepted and trusted set of National Statistics which help people to understand and monitor national well-being". Taking its lead from the Stiglitz Commission, the Programme has focused on providing: a fuller understanding of the economy – and has developed a set of measures of economic well-being to better reflect income, wealth and the household perspective; a better understanding of society – by conducting a 6 month national debate asking the nation 'what matters', defining a reporting framework of domains and measures of national well-being and adding questions about personal well-being to ONS largest household survey; and promoting sustainable development and monitoring the environment for the well-being of future generations – through developing a set of environmental accounts as well as measures of social, human and natural capital. Measuring national well-being in the UK is a long term development programme but much progress has already been made in raising the importance of well-being measurement in UK Policy, internationally and outside Government. Critical to this success has been regular stakeholder and citizen engagement from the outset.

Keywords: capitals; sustainable development; UK policy, stakeholder engagement